

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated April 11, 2008. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claim 8 has been amended; and claims 1-3 and 9-12 are cancelled. Thus, claim 8 is currently pending in the present application.

On pages 3-5 of the Office Action, the previous claims are rejected over the prior art. In view of the present claim amendments, it appears that the most relevant rejection is that of claim 8. In particular, claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,980) in view of Doi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,192,903). It is submitted that the present invention, as embodied by amended claim 8, now clearly distinguishes over the Tomita and Doi references for the following reasons.

Independent method claim 8 has been amended to recite that the scattering prevention cup is lowered until an upper surface of the scattering prevention cup lies substantially on the same plane as an upper surface of the substrate held by the substrate holder after processing the substrate with a substrate processing liquid.

In accordance with the claimed method, when the scattering cup is positioned in the cleaning position (see Fig. 3) after processing the substrate with a substrate processing liquid, an upper surface of the scattering prevention cup lies substantially on the same plane as an upper surface of the substrate held by the substrate holder. Accordingly, when the scattering prevention cup 18 is positioned in the cleaning position shown in Fig. 3, the cleaning liquid (substrate processing liquid) is blocked by the smaller-diameter portion 18b, and flows down along the

inner wall surface of the scattering prevention cup 18, thereby cleaning substantially the entire inner wall surface of the scattering prevention cup 18.

In contrast thereto, such a feature is not disclosed or suggested by any of applied prior art references, taken alone or in combination.

Tomita teaches a substrate washing device comprising a cleaning chamber 1 for surrounding the substrate (corresponds to the claimed "scattering prevention cup"). However, the cleaning chamber 1 of the Tomita apparatus is not movable in a vertical direction, and thus, the Tomita apparatus does not operate as recited in claim 8. In particular, the Tomita cleaning chamber does not assume different positions during substrate processing or substrate cleaning.

In the present invention, the scattering prevention cup is moved in a vertical direction between a substrate processing position (Fig. 2) and a substrate cleaning position (Fig. 3). See page 8, lines 6-22 of the specification as originally filed.

Doi is cited by the Examiner to teach a movable cup 80 including a lower cup 75 and an upper cup 76. The upper cup 76 is moveable in a vertical direction between an upper position (col. 7, lines 15-24) and a lower position (col. 6, lines 59-65) below the wafer 21. As shown in Fig. 1, at an elevated position, the upper end of the cup 76 is above the surface of the wafer 21. Thus, the Doi reference does not disclose or suggest the limitation of amended claim 8 that requires "lowering the scattering prevention cup until an upper surface of the scattering prevention cup lies substantially on the same plane as an upper surface of the substrate."

Since the Tomita and Doi reference do not disclose a scattering prevention cup that is lowered until an upper surface thereof lies substantially on the same plane as an upper surface of the

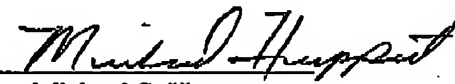
substrate, the Tomita and Doi references do not disclose Applicant's invention as defined in independent claim 8.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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